

REMARKS

The present application was filed on March 30, 2000 with claims 1-16. A declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131, dated June 23, 2004, has established a priority date of April 2, 1999 for the claims. In an amendment dated January 26, 2005, claims 7 and 14 were canceled and claims 17-20 were added. Prior to the present amendment, claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 were pending in the present application, including independent claims 1 and 10.

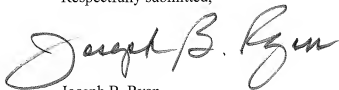
In the Decision on Appeal dated April 30, 2009, the Board reversed the §102(e) rejection of claims 1, 10 and 17-20 and the §103(a) rejections of claims 2-6, 8-9, 11-13, 15 and 16. The Board entered new grounds of rejection under 37 CFR 41.50(b) for claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12, 13 and 15-20 under §103(a).

Applicants hereby reopen prosecution under 37 C.F.R. §41.50(b)(1) in order to amend the claims without prejudice solely in order to expedite issuance of the allowable subject matter noted by the Board in the Decision at page 19, lines 16-17, and on page 24, lines 6-7: “[W]e find no evidence that any of the cited references describe claims 3 and 11. . . . No new ground of rejection has been entered for claims 3 and 11. The rejection of claims 3 and 11 is not sustained.”

More particularly, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 so as to incorporate the limitations of allowable dependent claim 3, as well as the limitations of intervening dependent claims 2, 17 and 18, all of which have been canceled. Applicants have also amended independent claim 10 so as to incorporate the limitations of allowable dependent claim 11, as well as the limitations of intervening dependent claims 19 and 20, all of which have been canceled. Claims 4, 5, 12 and 13 have been amended solely in order to update the dependencies thereof in view of the aforementioned cancellations.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 1, 4-6, 8-10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 are in condition for allowance, and such favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph B. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Ryan" clearly legible.

Date: June 29, 2009

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